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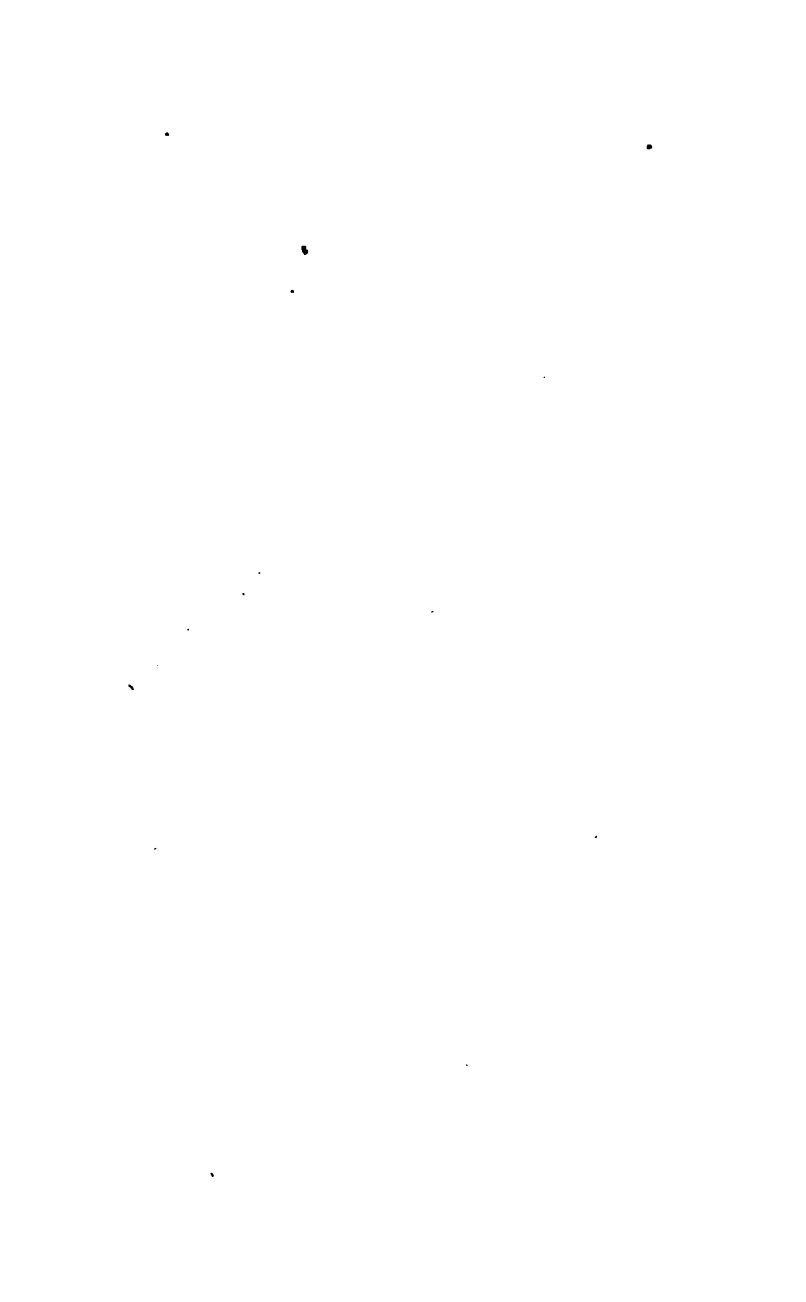
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THE

FASHIONABLE WORLD

DISPLAYED.

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THE
FASHIONABLE WORLD
DISPLAYED.

BY
THEOPHILUS CHRISTIAN, Esq.

"VELUTI IN SPECULUM."

THE STAGE.

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INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE often been surprised, that among the many descriptions which ingenious writers have given of places and people comparatively insignificant, no complete account has yet been written of the fashionable world. It is true, that our poets and caricaturists have honored this people with a great share of their notice, and many particulars, not a little edifying, have been made known through the medium of these admirable publications. It is also true, that our prose-writers have occasionally cast a very pertinent glance over this fairy ground. Some of these have even gone so far, as to write absolute treatises upon certain parts of the fashionable character. Mrs.

More, for example, has delineated their religion, and Lord Chesterfield their morals, with the greatest exactness and precision. Nor would it be just to overlook the very acceptable labours of those writers, who in their Court-calendars and Court-almanacks bring us acquainted from time to time with the modes of dress which prevail in the fashionable world, and the names of its most distinguished inhabitants. But after all that has been done towards exhibiting the manners and unfolding the character of this splendid community, much remains to be done : for though certain details have been well enough handled, yet I repeat, that a complete and systematic account of the fashionable world is still a desideratum in cosmography.

I am far from pretending to either the ability or the design of supplying this defi-

ciency. The utmost that I propose to myself, is to bring more particulars into a group, than former writers have done ; and to exhibit an outline, upon which others of more enlarged experience may improve. It seems to me of great importance to the interests of society, that its members should be known to each other ; and of this I am persuaded, that if there be one description of people, the knowledge of whose genuine character would be more edifying to mankind than another, it is —the people of Fashion.

FASHIONABLE WORLD,

&c.

CHAP. I.

SITUATION—BOUNDARIES—CLIMATE—
SEASONS.

THOUGH I do not undertake to write a geographical account of the Fashionable World, yet I should think myself highly culpable were I to pass over this interesting part of the subject wholly in silence. My readers must be at the same time cautioned not to form their expectations of the geography of Fashion from that of other countries. The fact is, that the whole community, extensive as it is, can scarcely be treated as having any peculiar or exclusive locality. They are not, it is true, absolute wanderers like the tribes of Arabia,

nor yet are they regular settlers, like the convicts at Botany Bay; but moveable and migratory to a certain degree, and to a certain degree stationary and permanent, they live among the inhabitants of the parent country, neither absolutely mixing with them, nor yet actually separated from them.

This paradoxical state of the people renders it not a little difficult to reduce their territory within the rules of geographical description. They have, it is true, their *degrees* and their *circles*; but these terms are used by people of Fashion in a sense so different from that which geographers have assigned them, that they afford no sort of assistance to the topographical inquirer. It is, I presume, on this account, that in all the improvements which have been made upon the globe, nothing has been done towards settling the meridian of Fashion; and though the Laplanders, the Hottentots, and the Esquimaux, have places assigned them, no more notice is taken of the people of Fashion than if they either did

not exist, or were not worthy of being mentioned. The only expedient, therefore, to which a writer can resort in this dearth of geographical materials, is that of designating the territory of Fashion by the ordinary names of those places through which it passes; and this is, in fact, strictly conformable to that usage which prevails in the language and communication of the people themselves: for London, Tunbridge, Bath, Weymouth, &c. are in their mouths names for little else than the lands and societies of Fashion which they respectively contain. Now, the portion of each place to which Fashion lays claim, is neither fixed as to its dimensions nor its locality. In London, a small proportion of the whole is fashionable; in Bath, the proportion is greater; and in some watering-places of the latest creation, Fashion puts in her demand for nearly the whole. The locality of its domains is also contingent and mutable; various circumstances concur in determining when a portion of ground shall become fashionable, and when it shall cease to be

such. The only rule of any steadiness with which I am acquainted, and which chiefly relates to the metropolis, is that which prescribes a western latitude: if this be excepted (which indeed admits of no relaxation), events of very little moment decide all the rest. If, for example, a Dutchess, or the wife of some bourgeois-gentilhomme, who has purchased the privileges of the order, should open a suite of rooms for elegant society in any new quarter, the soil is considered to receive a sort of consecration by such a circumstance, and an indefinite portion of the vicinity is added to the territory of Fashion. If, on the other hand, a shop be opened, a sign hung out, or any symptom of business be shown in a quarter that has hitherto been a stranger to every sound but the rattling of carriages, the thunder of knockers, and the vociferation of coachmen and servants, it is ten to one but the privileges of Fashion are withdrawn from that place, and the whole range of buildings is gradually given up to those who are either needy enough to keep shops, or vulgar enough to en-

ture them. Now, it happens as a consequence from this adoption of new soil and disfranchisement of old, that the territory of Fashion is extremely irregular and interrupted. A traveller, determined to pursue its windings, would soon be involved in a most mysterious labyrinth ; his track would be crossed by portions of country which throw him repeatedly out of his beat ; insomuch that his progress would resemble that of a naturalist, who, in tracing the course of a mineral through the bowels of the earth, encounters various breaks and intersections, and often finds the corresponding parts of the same stratum unaccountably separated from each other.

It would be only fatiguing the reader to say more upon the topographical part of my subject : it is obvious from what has been stated, that the regions of Fashion, considered as a whole, are rather numerous than compact : indeed such difference of opinion subsists among the people themselves upon the territories which are entitled to that name,

that no correct judgment can be pronounced upon a question of so much controversy. Thus much, however, may be affirmed, that there is scarcely a market-town in the kingdom in which some portion of land is not invested with fashionable privileges, and designated by such terms as mark the wish of the inhabitants to have it considered as forming part and parcels of the demesnes of Fashion.

The *Climate* of Fashion is almost entirely factitious and artificial, and consequently differs in many material respects from the natural temperature of those respective places over which its jurisdiction extends. Though changes from heat to cold, and vice versa, are very common among these people, yet heat may be said to be the prevailing character of the climate. They appear to me to have but two seasons in their year; these they call, in conformity to common language rather than to just calculation, Winter and Summer. Of summer little is known; for it seems to be a rule among this people to disband and disperse

at the approach of it, and not to rally or reunite till the winter has fairly commenced: though, therefore, they exist somehow or somewhere during the summer months, they wish it to be considered that they do not exist under their fashionable character. They wash themselves in the sea, drink laxative waters, lose a little money at billiards, or catch a few colds at public rooms; but all these things they do as individuals, and wholly out of their corporate capacity as members of the community of Fashion: so that in their mode of disposing of the summer they invert the standing rule of most other animals; they choose the fair season for their torpid state, and show no signs of life but during the winter. It is not easy to say exactly when the winter *begins* in the fashionable world; an inhabitant of Bath would have one mode of reckoning, and an inhabitant of London another: to do justice to the subject, the commencement of winter ought to be regulated by the former of these places, and the close of it by the latter. Supposing, therefore,

that it begins some time in November, there can be no difficulty in settling its duration ; for the 4th of June is by a tacit, yet binding ordinance, considered as a limit over which a fashionable winter can never pass.

There are many circumstances in which the climate of Fashion stands peculiarly distinguished from every other. It has already been intimated that heat is its prevailing characteristic ; it is, however, not a little remarkable, that this heat is at its highest point in the winter season ; and that the inhabitants often perspire more freely when the snow is upon the ground than they do in the dog-days. The truth is, that, as was before said, the climate is wholly created by artificial circumstances, and the natural temperature of the air is completely done away ; the sort of communication which they keep up with each other requires a species of apparatus which fills their atmosphere with an immoderate degree of phlogiston. Besides this, they are notoriously fond of assembling in insufferable

crowds ; and travellers have assured us, that they have often witnessed from ten to twelve hundred persons suffocating each other within a space which would scarcely have afforded convenient accommodation for a dozen families. Certain it is, that no people upon earth have less benefit from the light of the sun than the people of Fashion ; so that if it were not for torches, candles, and Argand lamps, they would scarcely ever see each others' faces.

With regard to the constitutions of these people, I have been inclined to think them naturally robust, from observing the astonishing heat and fatigue which they endure, and in this respect the women have appeared to evince an uncommon degree of hardiness ; for, besides that they wear on every occasion a slighter species of clothing than the men, I have been confidently told that many among them will appear, in the severest part of the season, with dresses of such transparency and scantiness, as convince every beholder that

they who wear them are utter strangers to the weaknesses of the sex. There is, however, some room for doubting whether the air which this people breathe, and the usages which prevail among them, are favourable to the constitution : their patience of fatigue has been thought to be wholly the result of habit, and their hardiness has been conjectured to be little more than an air of extravagance and bravado. The frequent transitions which they make from heat to cold, and back again from cold to heat (perhaps half a dozen times in as many hours), must very materially diminish the physical strength of their bodies. Certain it is that their natural countenances do not betray the usual symptoms of health ; and it is, I believe, admitted, that instances of extraordinary longevity are not very common among them.

CHAP. II.

GOVERNMENT—LAWS, &c.

THE History of the Fashionable World is a sort of undertaking, which, to be accurately executed, would require abundantly more leisure and diligence than I could afford to bestow upon it: and I very much doubt whether, after all, one reader out of a hundred would be at the pains of perusing it. The fact is, that the members of this community are not sufficiently substantial to form historical pictures. Their employments are not of a nature to make their memory an object with mankind. Hence, though they make a splendid appearance in a ball-room, they appear to little advantage in a record; and, like the dancing figures in a magic lantern, they seem to have answered the end of their being when they have afforded an evening's amusement. For these and other rea-

sons which might be assigned, I shall content myself with giving a brief account of their polity and laws, referring those of my readers who are desirous of further information upon their history, to novels and romances, and to such chronicles of antiquity as have preserved the memorials of obsolete and superannuated manners.

It is a task of no ordinary difficulty to convey any tolerable idea of this people, in their aggregate or national capacity. Consisting, as they do, of various and detached societies, they are yet considered to possess a sort of federal relation among each other ; and to unite into an imaginary whole under the collective denomination of the Fashionable World. Their population is more fluctuating and uncertain than that of any people upon the face of the earth. There are among them certain tribes or families, distinguished by different descendible titles, who claim a sort of prescriptive right to the name of fashionables. In them the federal appellation continues here-

ditary ; and it is an axiom among them, that people of *quality* (for this is the term by which they designate the titled gentry) can never be out of fashion. These are almost the only standing members of the community ; and, if these be excepted, all the rest of their body is mutable in the extreme. There is a perpetual reciprocation of numbers between them and the society in which they reside. Scarcely an hour passes without some interchange. The gossip of every day announces that some have migrated from the region of Fashion, and that others have made their appearance within it for the first time. The causes which produce these variations, and the reasons upon which they are founded, are in some instances too mysterious, and in others too frivolous, to become subjects of recital. In general it may be affirmed, that though persons become fashionable with the concurrence of their will, they cease to be such against it. For, if a few accidental converts to plain sense and sober piety be excepted, the greater part of those who retire,

have been superseded ; and resign their places, only because they cannot any longer retain them. However that be, the fluctuation thus occasioned in the numbers and characters of those who compose this fashionable community, diversifies its complexion daily ; and renders a precise account of its population and totality utterly impossible.

The form of government subsisting among this people, so far as it can be traced out, is Oligarchical, and the spirit of it is absolute and despotic. The few in whose hands the supreme authority resides, do not consist of any regular or definite number, nor are they confined to any particular sex. In general they are composed of persons out of both sexes, who, while they exercise a separate influence in things relating to the sexes respectively, possess also a common jurisdiction in matters of universal concern.

The governing few are not invested with their authority by any formalities of law ;

nor do they obtain their station by any specific qualifications. The magistracy which they hold appears to be neither hereditary nor elective, but contingent. The term of their continuance in power is also as capricious as the right by which they acquire it. One thing however is certain, that as a moral reputation has no influence in recommending them to the stations they fill, so the forfeiture of it in no degree weakens the stability or abridges the duration of their power. That a government of this independent description should exist in the heart of the British empire, an *imperium in imperio*, will appear scarcely credible to my reader. He may however rely upon it that the fact is as I have stated it; and if he should express his wonder that such contempt of the sovereign authority as it eventually leads to, has not been properly resisted, he will only do what thousands have done before him. But to return—

The laws by which the government of Fashion is administered, like the common law

of England, are unwritten, and derive their force, as that does, from usage and prescription. The only code of any note among this people is that which they distinguish by the collective appellation of the law of honour. This extraordinary code has been defined to be "a system of rules constructed by people of Fashion, and calculated to facilitate their intercourse with one another*." Now if this definition be a just one (and I presume it is from the high authority by which it is given), it will afford us no indifferent help towards unfolding the mysteries of fashionable jurisprudence.

It seems then that the law of honour by which people of Fashion are said to be governed, is wholly and exclusively designed to make them acceptable to each other. Now, not to mention other things, persons in a fashionable sphere cannot be strictly agreeable to each other unless they are well dressed; nor can that intercourse which they chiefly value, be

* Vide Paley's Mor. Philos. vol. i. p. 1.

pleasantly maintained without splendid equipages, choice wines, and sumptuous entertainments. As, therefore, the necessity of the case requires such accommodations, the law of honour, to say the least, does not look very nicely into the means by which they may have been procured. Hence it follows by the fairest inference, that a man of Fashion is not at all the less respectable in his own circle, merely because he is what the rest of the world calls unjust. For whatever may be the law elsewhere, a man of Fashion can owe nothing to his inferiors: and his character will therefore suffer no stain, though he should have broken his word a thousand times with the reptile that made his clothes, built his carriage, or furnished his table.

This law is also distinguished by many other features of toleration, which well account for the respect and influence that it possesses in the fashionable world. By a spirit of accommodation of which there is no other example, it overlooks, if it does not

even encourage, a variety of actions which in the mouth of a moralist would be absolute vices ; and which, to say the truth, are scarcely deserving of a much better name. Thus, a man may debauch his tenant's daughter, seduce the wife of his friend, and be faithless and even brutal to his own, and yet be esteemed a man of honour (which is the same as a man of Fashion), and have a right to make any man fight him who says he is not. In like manner, a man may blaspheme God, and encourage his children and servants to do the same ; he may neglect the interests and squander the property of his family ; he may be a tyrant in his house and a bully in the streets ; he may lie abed all day, and drink and game all night ; and yet be a most dutiful subject of the law of honour, and a shining character in the society of Fashion.

There is, I own, much convenience in all this, and some consistency. Persons who live only for this world should have a propor-

tionable latitude allowed them for the employment of their animal propensities; and the law which provides for the regulation of their conduct should have a special reference to this consideration. Supposing, therefore, that people of Fashion ought to exist, they must have such a law as that which they possess. So that, taking the law of honour in this connexion, I cannot but think it a masterpiece of political contrivance. At the same time, I cannot agree with those who have been led to consider this table of fashionable jurisprudence as deserving a place in the temple of morality. Into this error a celebrated writer appears to have fallen in his Treatise of Moral Philosophy. For having defined morality to be "that science which teaches men their duty and the reasons of it," he proceeds to cite the law of honour as one of the three rules by which men are governed. That respectable writer has indeed admitted that this law is *defective*, because it does not provide for the duties to God and to inferiors; he has also proclaimed that it is *bad*, by stating that it al-

lows of fornication, adultery, drunkenness, prodigality, duelling, &c. Still, however, he has rather left us to infer that it ought wholly to be rejected, than absolutely told us so. By classing it with the law of the land and the Scriptures, he has (undesignedly no doubt) prevented its utter condemnation, and afforded ground for considering it as a moral rule to which men owe a qualified obedience. But to return—

Having specified the sort of practices which the law of honour allows, I shall take some brief notice of the duties which it exacts. The principal of these, and that upon which its tone and spirit are most peremptory, is the resentment of injuries. Now it must be observed, that the term injury, in the use of people of Fashion, is of a very wide and comprehensive signification. It means not only that which a man suffers, but any thing by which he may suffer, or by which the most ambiguous and distant intimation is conveyed that he deserves to suffer. Thus a sister seduced

and then abandoned, and a word or a look of defiance or of contempt, are all equally injuries, and constitute, in the spirit of this code, so many obligations to the most lively and implacable resentment. It may be that the offended person is of a placable disposition, and would rather endure a moderate injury than seek revenge ; or he may have too much respect for the laws of the parent state to wish to seek redress in any other than the legal way ; or he may know that the offending party is a man disposed to seek a quarrel, and that he desires nothing so much as to provoke the innocent person whom he has purposely insulted, to claim satisfaction ; or lastly, it may be that the supposed injury is founded wholly on mistake, and that the reputed aggressor will not believe nor own himself to have offended, and will therefore make no atonement. In all these cases personal resentment might as well be waived ; but this the law of honour positively forbids ; and he who should conscientiously decline to pursue a personal quarrel upon these or even higher

motives, might be a better father, a better husband, a better subject, and a better Christian for so doing, but he would certainly be a worse man of honour.

Having said so much of the principal duty enjoined by the law of honour, I shall offer a few observations upon the sort of punishment which it inflicts. I trust I shall be excused, if, in treating this part of my subject, I employ the term *punishment* in a sense not strictly similar to that in which it is ordinarily employed. The fact is, that this singular law makes the parties both judges in their own cause, and executioners of their own sentence. The universal award against every convicted offender is, that he shall fight a duel with the offended party. So that if that may be set down as punishment which is ultimate in a controversy, and which is exacted as a satisfaction to the law, death or exposure to it is the lowest punishment which honour inflicts upon the least offender, and the highest which it enforces upon the greatest.

And this is, I confess, a political incongruity which I have not a little difficulty in reconciling with the good sense of many who have undertaken to defend it. The law of England has often been blamed (and I think with justice) as unreasonably sanguinary. In answer to this it has been said, that though nearly two hundred offences of almost as many degrees of guilt are made equally punishable with death, yet justice is administered with so much discretion and mercy, that the penalty is inflicted only on a few. Feeble as this excuse is for a law which deals in blood, it would be well for the law of honour if it admitted of such a palliation. But the truth is, that in this latter case there is nothing to abate the demand for blood—there is no legal arbitration of the difference, no court to inquire into the true grounds of the quarrel, and no depositary, either of equity or of mercy, to balance the merits of the controversy, or, in the event of a false or a rigorous judgment, to withdraw the victim from suffering.

It must be evident from this view which has been presented of the law, that as an injury may be created by the most trivial occurrence, so punishment may be inflicted with the most preposterous and unequal retribution. I cannot better illustrate the frivolous foundation upon which an injury may be created than by adverting to an occurrence of very recent date, and of sufficient notoriety in the fashionable world. Two men of Fashion, incensed against each other by an accidental rencontre between their respective dogs, dropped in their warmth certain expressions which rendered them amenable to the bloody code. Duel was declared indispensable; and in less than twelve hours one of the two was dispatched into eternity, and the other narrowly escaped the same fate.

The inequality of the retribution is, indeed, an inevitable consequence of that article of the code which compels men of Fashion, without distinction, to decide their differences by fighting a duel. It results from this promis-

enous injunction, that the peaceable man must fight the quarrelsome; that the heir of a noble family must meet the ruined esquire; and that the man who has never drawn a trigger in his life must encounter the fashionable ruffian who has all his life been doing little else. This inequality is further manifest from the different circumstances and connexions of life under which the combatants may be found: the son of many hopes may be matched against the worthless prodigal; the virtuous parent against the unprincipled seducer; and the man of industry, usefulness, and beneficence, against the miscreant who only lives to pamper his lusts and to corrupt his fellow-creatures. Nothing has here been said of the indiscriminate manner in which judgment is executed: the innocent and the guilty must both be involved in the same awful contingency; each must put his life to hazard; and the probability is, that, if one of the two should fall, it will be the man whose conduct least entitled him to punishment, and whose life was most worth preserving.

I forbear to enter further into the system of fashionable government, or to meddle with the inferior points of legislation: what has been said of the law of honour will apply, with little variation, to every other institution of minor concern. To facilitate polite intercourse, and to exclude, as much as may be, duties to God and inferiors, is a considerable object in every regulation; and it is but justice to this people to say, that, in this respect, they are at once consistent and successful.

CHAP. III.

RELIGION AND MORALITY.

IN attempting to give an account of the *religion* of the people of Fashion, I feel myself not a little embarrassed : it were, indeed, very much to be wished that one of their own number would, in the name of the rest, draw up a confession of their faith. This is, perhaps, expecting too much ; and yet I cannot but think that it would be a very good employment for some of those pliable priests who pass so much of their time in the circles of Fashion. They give every proof that they have leisure for the undertaking ; and the access which they have to these people by attending them so familiarly at their theatres, their operas, and their routs, must render them perfectly masters of the subject. However, as I am not aware that any thing of this nature is yet taken in hand, I shall lay before

my reader such observations as I have been able to make; partly because the perfection of my work requires that something should be said on the subject, and partly because I should be unwilling to afford, by my silence, any ground for suspicion that there is *no* religion in the fashionable world.

I am then, in the first place, decidedly of opinion, that people of Fashion are not *Atheists*; though I am sufficiently aware that some strict religionists have entertained an opposite conviction. It has been contended by the latter in support of their hypothesis, that people who believed in a God would have some scruple about taking such liberties with his name, and his attributes, and his threatenings, and generally with all his moral prerogatives, as people of Fashion are accustomed to do. There is certainly something plausible in this sort of reasoning, and I must candidly confess that I have never yet seen it fairly overthrown; but then I cannot think that it proves their disbelief of a God, though it cer-

tainly does prove their want of reverence for him. It seems to me, at the same time, probable, that the ideas of this people, and those of stricter Christians, upon the subject of that reverence which is due to the Deity, may differ sufficiently to account for these offensive liberties, without having recourse to the hypothesis of Atheism. Indeed, when I consider the construction and the spirit of that law by which these people are bound, I can find other reasons for their conduct in this respect than those which these theorists have assigned. Those obnoxious expressions from which so much has been inferred, are in perfect unison with the exclusion of a Deity from the rules which regulate their intercourse with each other. I am more than ever, therefore, confirmed in my opinion that the charge of Atheism against them is without any just foundation; and that their appeals to God in levity, earnestness, and anger, are designed to show their contempt of his authority, and not their denial of his being.

I was for a long time of opinion that these people were believers in *Christ*; for I had observed that his name was found in their formularies of devotion, associated with their baptismal designation, and frequently appealed to in their conversation with each other. There were, I confess, many things at the time which staggered me. Having taken up my ideas of the Saviour from those Scriptures which they profess equally to receive, I was not a little astonished at the ultimate difference between us. Their belief of a God was, I knew, inevitable, and forced upon them by every thing in nature and experience; I could therefore conceive, without much difficulty, how they could subscribe to his being, and yet not hallow his name: but I could not with equal facility conceive that people should go out of their way to embrace a solemn article of revealed religion, only that they might have an opportunity of trifling with the holy name of Him who was the author and the object of that revelation. I had, besides, occasion to remark that this name

was seldom appealed to but by the ladies ; and it did not appear in the first instance probable, that the gentlemen would leave them in exclusive possession of a mode of imprecation by which any thing was meant. These and other circumstances excited in my mind a great deal of speculation. I will not, however, trouble my readers with the many conclusions which I drew from them, since an event has occurred which affords no indifferent evidence that belief in a Saviour does not form an article of fashionable religion. The event to which I refer, is the publication of a Memoir of the late Lord Camelford, by the Rev. W. Cockburne. In this Memoir the author professes to acquaint the world with the last moments of a fashionable young man, who had received a mortal wound in an affair of honour. In perusing this extraordinary narrative, I was much surprised at finding that neither the dying penitent (for such he is represented to have been) nor his spiritual confessor ever once mentioned the name of Christ. But when, on further attention, I

found his Lordship expressing a hope that his *own* dying sufferings would expiate his sins, and placing his dependance upon the merey of his *Creator*, I had only to conclude that the divine was deterred from mentioning a name with which his office must make him familiar, out of respect for that fashionable creed from which it is excluded.

There is some reason for supposing that these people believe in the immortality of the soul, the existence of an evil spirit, and a place of future torment. It must at the same time be acknowledged, that their ideas on each of these points are so loose and confused, that it is difficult to determine in what sense they apprehend them.

In subscribing, for example, to the immortality of the soul, they give it a value to which the corruptible body can never pretend: the inference from this, in a fair train of reasoning, would be, that the care of the former is of infinitely more importance than

that of the latter. And yet this is manifestly not the inference they draw ; for the experience of every week proves, that if they give three hours to the soul they think it too much, while they will give six days and nights to the body, and think it too little. This is, I confess, a part of their character of which no satisfactory explanation has ever been given.

I have no other evidence of their belief in the doctrines of an evil spirit and a place of future torment, than the frequent reference which they make to hell and the devil in their ordinary conversation ; I have, at the same time, entertained my doubts whether they use these awful terms in the same religious sense in which orthodox Christians are accustomed to employ them. These doubts have been greatly encouraged by that sceptical facetiousness with which they apply the name of the evil spirit to their fashionable amusements, and make the place of torment

a subject of scenic representation *. I will not say that these people do not believe what they thus caricature; but I think it must be obvious that they cannot have any very exact notions of their scriptural import, while they continue to employ them as terms of merriment and sources of diversion.

Religious worship, though not inculcated as absolutely necessary in the fashionable world, is yet neither prohibited nor renounced. Certain persons of considerable influence among them, and whose connexion with them arose out of the incidental circumstances of birth, or office, or elevation, have carried into the societies of Fashion some principles which operate as a check upon the natural libertinism of the community. I impute it to this, rather than to any sober consideration of duty, that religious worship, though it is not esteemed *essential* to a fashionable character, is yet not regarded as any impeach-

* Vide Don Juan, and the ballets at the Opera House on the vigils of the Sabbath.

ment of it. My reason, in a word, for ascribing this to influence rather than principle is, that it is a contradiction of ideas to suppose that persons can seriously mean to worship a God whom they habitually blaspheme, or to pray against a devil whom they are accustomed to hold out as a bugbear or a joke.

Their mode of worship is generally that which prevails in the country in which they live; they like the eclat of an establishment, and the convenience of taking things as they find them. There are, I am told, some members of Fashion among those who dissent from the established religion: these I shall leave to the care of their pastors, and proceed to animadvert upon the fashionable adherents to the religion of the state. In their manner of observing the rites of public worship, nothing is so remarkable as the degree of refinement which they introduce into every part of it which is capable of being refined upon. Chapels are for the most part preferred to churches; and the reason, among others, for

this preference appears to be, that the modernness of their structure, and their exemption from parochial control, render them better adapted to such elegant improvements as are requisite for fashionable piety. Hence patent stoves, Wilton carpets, mats, and a variety of ingenious accommodations and fanciful ornaments, give to their favourite place of devotion the air of a drawing-room ; so that a stranger might be excused for doubting whether he was about to worship the Deity, or to pay a fashionable visit. The conduct of their service is in many cases marked by an attention to mechanical effect, which is more nearly allied to the parade of the theatre, than to the simplicity of the church : the orators who fill their pulpits are generally preferred in proportion as they display the captivating attractions of a graceful utterance and a liberal theology. These preachers have, indeed, a task to execute of no ordinary difficulty ; by the tyranny of custom they are compelled to take their text, and to produce their authorities, from the canon of Scripture ;

and I think it is much to the praise of their dexterity, that so often as they have occasion to discourse from those offensive writings, they yet contrive to give so little offence. How they manage this, I am at a loss to know; unless it be by blinking every question that involves a moral application, or else by allowing their audience the benefit of that fashionable salvo, that the company present is always excepted.

I have before delivered it as my opinion, that this people comply with the custom of public worship, rather from influence than from conviction; and this opinion receives some confirmation from the pains which they take to remove those impressions which the offices of religion may have made upon their minds. In the metropolis, the visit to the house of God is succeeded, as soon as may be, by the drive into the Park. Here they meet with a prodigious concourse of persons of their own description, and have the most

charming opportunities of seeing the world, exhibiting themselves, and of conversing upon the opera of the preceding evening, or the parties for the ensuing week. The effect of this drive upon their animal spirits, and the whole frame of their mind, is just what might have been expected. Though they have so recently assisted at the most awful solemnities, they can now relax into the most boisterous mirth; and satisfying themselves that they have done their duty by remembering the Almighty in the first part of the day, they take no common pains to forget him during the remainder.

In the vicinity of the metropolis, and in other places of fashionable residence, other expedients are resorted to in order to produce the same effect. The carriage that has conveyed the family to church must now be driven round the neighbourhood, and the bells and knockers of twenty doors announce that the restraints of public worship are at an end.

Though there is something very lively and ingenious in this method of dissipating religious impressions, yet I think it might be an improvement upon the plan, not to allow them to be made at all. Experiments to this effect have been actually tried by many persons of no mean condition in the fashionable world, who have wholly renounced the habit of public worship; and these experiments would probably have been tried upon a much larger scale, had it not been for the consideration of setting a pernicious example; for it seems to be a maxim among many of them, that persons in a dependent state are almost the only people who can be benefited by the offices of devotion. With a charity, therefore, that does them honour, they make a sacrifice of their feelings and their time to the interests of their inferiors; and when it is considered how much whirling in a carriage, gaping, gadding, and gossiping, it takes them to recover the true tone of dissipation, it will be seen that the sacrifice is not inconsiderable.

In observing thus largely upon the religion of the fashionable world, I have furnished a sufficient clue to their *moral* character: if, from some hints which have been thrown out in this and the preceding chapter, rigid Christians should be led to infer that it is no better than it should be, they must be reminded that people of Fashion have a standard peculiar to themselves; and that therefore what are deviations from *our* standard, are very often near approximations to *theirs*. In fact, they have acted in this respect with the same convenient policy by which they have been guided in framing every other part of their system. Pleasure being the object upon which a life of fashion terminates, it was sagaciously enough foreseen that an unbending morality would be utterly incompatible with the modes, and habits, and plans of such a career; there remained, therefore, no alternative but that of frittering away the strength and substance of the morality of the Gospel, till it became sufficiently tame and pliable for the sphere of accommodation in which it was to act. The

consequence has been, that while they employ the same terms to denote their moral ideas, as are in use among Christians in general, yet they limit or enlarge their signification as expediency requires. Thus modesty, honesty, humanity, and sobriety—names, with stricter moralists, for the purest virtues—are so modified and liberalized by fashionable casuists, as to be capable of an alliance with a low degree of every vice to which they stand opposed. A woman may expose her bosom, paint her face, assume a forward air, gaze without emotion, and laugh without restraint at the loosest scenes of theatrical licentiousness, and yet be after all—a *modest* woman. A man may detain the money which he owes his tradesman, and contract new debts for ostentatious superfluities, while he has neither the means nor the inclination to pay his old ones, and yet be after all a very *honest* fellow. A woman of fashion may disturb the repose of her family every night, abandon her children to mercenary nurses, and keep her horses and her servants in the streets till day-

break, without any impeachment of her *humanity* : so the gentleman of Fashion may swallow his two or three bottles a-day, and do all his friends the kindness to lay them under the table as often as they dine with him ; yet if constitution or habit secure him against the same ignominious effects, he claims to be considered a *sober* man.

There would be no end of going over all the eccentricities of fashionable morality. To those who exact that truth which allows of no duplicity, that honour which scorns all baseness, and that virtue which wars with every vice, I question but every thing in the morals of this people would appear anomalous and extraordinary ; but to those who consider how necessary a certain portion of wickedness is to such a life of sense as these people must necessarily lead, it will not be matter of surprise that there should be so little genuine morality among them : the wonder will rather be—that there should be any at all.

CHAP. IV.

EDUCATION.

No people in the universe expend larger sums upon the education of their children than people of Fashion. It is a maxim with them to commence the great business of instruction in the very earliest period of life; and if the system of education corresponded with the pains bestowed upon it, and the price at which it is purchased, no persons would do more honour to society than the subjects of the fashionable world: as it is, they are not a little ornamental to a nation. They are not, it is true, either the columns or the base of the building; they neither support nor strengthen it; but they supply the place of reliefs, and hangings, and other superadded decorations.

Religion is allowed a respectable place among the studies of the nursery. All those useful tables of instruction are assiduously employed, which teach who was the *first*, the *wisest*, the *meekest*, and the *strongest* man; and the child is carefully conducted, by a catechetical process, into the theory and practice of a Christian. As, however, the child advances to boyish or girlish years, this religious discipline is pretty generally relaxed, in order to allow sufficient scope for the cultivation of those modish pursuits which mark the man and the woman of Fashion. And here I cannot help remarking how anxious the greater part of fashionable parents are to guard the minds of their children against the *permanent* influence of that religion which they yet have caused them to be taught. The fact is, that they would have them acquainted with the technical language, and expert in the liturgical formalities of Christianity; for this can neither disparage their character nor impede their pleasures; but a serious impression of its truths upon their hearts might disaffect

them to the follies and vices which they are destined to practise, and therefore is the thing of all others that is most to be dreaded. It is, I presume, upon this principle of precaution that our fashionable young men are not always intrusted to the care of persons distinguished for the practice of piety. It is not impossible indeed, that, either from the conversation, the connexions, or the example of the preceptor, the pupil may contract certain habits which it was not the precise object of his education to produce. But then the evil is not so great as moral critics would suppose; for, as the youth is to figure in the circles of Fashion, he will only have learnt, a little before the time, those practices which are to form a part of his manly character: and though it might perhaps be as well if he did not learn to swear and rake quite so soon, yet it is some consolation that he has escaped those methodistical impressions, which would have prevented him from swearing and raking as long as he lived.

It may also be considered as some confirmation of the reasoning above employed, that they introduce their children as early as possible to the amusements of the theatre. Now though swearing, and raking, and gaming when carried to excess, are blamed even by persons of Fashion themselves; yet it is notorious, that a reasonable proportion of each is indispensably requisite to a popular character in the circles of refinement. Habits of this sort must not be precipitately taken up. There must be a schooling for the man of pleasure as well as for the man of letters: and certainly no school exists in which the elements of modish vice can be studied with greater promise of proficiency, than the public theatres. When it is considered at what pains the managers of the stage are to import the seducing dramas of Germany, as well as to get up the loose productions of the English Muse; when it is further considered how studious the actors and actresses are to do justice, and even more than justice, to the luscious scenes of the piece, to give effect to

the equivoques by an arch emphasis, and to the oaths by a dauntless intonation;—when to all this is added, how many painted strumpets are stuck about the theatre, in the boxes, the galleries, and the avenues; and how many challenges to prostitution are thrown out in every direction; it will, I think, be difficult to imagine places better adapted, than the theatres at this moment are, to teach the theory and practice of fashionable iniquity.

What has been observed on the subject of education, though said principally with reference to the male branches of fashionable families, will yet, with a few changes, be found applicable to the youth of the other sex. The principal points upon which their scheme of education is brought to bear, are those of dissipation and display. A brilliant finger on the piano, wanton flexions in the dance, a rage for operas, plays, and parties, and the faculty of undergoing the fatiguing evolutions of a fashionable life without compunction of conscience, sense of weariness, or indications

of disgust, are qualifications which she who has acquired, will be considered as wanting little of a perfect education.

The same assiduity is discovered on the part of the parents, to train their girls for the sphere of polite life, as has been already observed with respect to the boys; and the methods that are pursued to accomplish this end are very nearly the same. The blush of virgin modesty (it is naturally foreseen) would be extremely inconvenient, not to say absolutely indecorous, in a woman of Fashion; and therefore it is wisely resolved, that such steps shall be taken, upon the girl's growing into life, as may most effectually destroy it. The theatre seems principally to be resorted to for this purpose; and it must be manifest from what has been already advanced, that no expedient could have been better chosen. As intrigue is the life of the drama, and this cannot be carried on without expressions, attitudes, and communications between the sexes of a very particular nature, there is

every reason for regarding the stage as a sovereign remedy for the infirmity of *blushing*.

There are other things to be said on behalf of the theatre as a school of polite morality. It has already appeared that the system of ethics which prevails among people of Fashion, differs materially from the received system of unfashionable Christians. Now, I know not any means by which a stranger anxious to ascertain wherein that difference consists, could better satisfy his inquiries than by visiting the theatres. The doctrine of the stage therefore exhibiting (as nearly as possible) the standard morality of polite society, nothing could be better imagined than to give the embryo woman of Fashion the earliest opportunity of learning to so much advantage, those lessons which she is afterwards to practise through life. What she has imbibed in the nursery, and what she hears in the church, would inspire her with a dread—perhaps a dislike—of many things upon which she must learn hereafter to look with familiar indiffer-

ence, if not with absolute complacency. She might thus (if some remedy were not provided) be led to take up with certain melancholy principles, which would either shut her out from the society of her friends, or make her miserable among them. But the stage corrects all this; and more than counterbalances the impressions of virtue by stratagems of the happiest contrivance.

It is worthy of attention how much ingenuity is displayed in bringing about that moral temperament which is necessary for the meridian of Fashion. The rake who is debauching innocence, squandering away property, and extending the influence of licentiousness to the utmost of his power, would (if fairly represented) excite spontaneous and universal abhorrence. But this would be extremely inconvenient, since raking, seduction, and prodigality make half the business and almost all the reputation of men of Fashion. What then must be done?—Some qualities of acknowledged excellence must be associated with

these vicious propensities, in order to prevent them from occasioning unmingled disgust. We may, I presume, refer it to the same policy, that in dramas of the greatest popularity the worthless libertine is represented as having at the bottom some of those properties which reflect most honour upon human nature: while—as if to throw the balance still more in favour of vice—the man of professed virtue is delineated as being in the main a sneaking and hypocritical villain. Lessons such as these are not likely to be lost upon the ingenuous feelings of a young girl. For, besides the fascinations of an elegant address and an artful manner, the whole conduct of the plot is an insidious appeal to the simplicity of her heart. She is taught to believe by these representations, that profligacy is the exuberance of a generous nature, and decorum the veil of a bad heart: so that having learnt, in the outset of her career, to associate frankness with vice, and duplicity with virtue, she will not be likely to separate these combinations during the remainder of her life.

To enter further into the minute details of a fashionable education, would only be to travel over ground which has been often and ingeniously explored by writers of the greatest eminence. Enough has been said to show, that their system of education, like every other branch of their economy, is adapted to qualify the parties for that polite intercourse with each other, which seems to constitute the very end of their being. And if it be considered of what nature that intercourse is, it will occasion no surprise, that the education which prepares for it should confound the distinctions of virtue and vice, and inculcate duplicity in religion, and prevarication in morals.

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CHAP. V.

MANNERS—DRESS—AMUSEMENTS—
LANGUAGE.

THE *manners* of this people are remarkably artificial. They appear to do every thing by rule; and not a word, a look, or a movement escapes them but what has at one time or other been studied. In every part of their demeanour they have reference to some invisible standard, which they call the *Ton* or the *Fashion* (from which latter term they have derived their appellation); and by this mysterious talisman their manners, their dress, their language, and the whole of their behaviour is tried. It is singular enough, that this standard which is to fix every thing, is itself the most variable of all things. The changes which it undergoes are so rapid, that it requires a sort of telegraphic communication to become acquainted with them: and

though there is no regular way by which they may be known, yet nothing is considered so disgraceful as not to know them.

The fluctuations to which this standard is subject, renders it difficult to catch the features of people of Fashion, or to speak with any precision upon the exterior of their character. They are, in fact, moulded and modified by such capricious and indefinable circumstances, that he who would exhibit a true picture of their manners, must write a history of the endless transmutations through which they are compelled to pass. It has indeed been remarked by nice observers, that a dissimulation of their sentiments and their feelings, is a feature in the character of this people which never forsakes them ; and that amidst all the revolutions which their other habits experience, this master-principle preserves an unchanging uniformity. Nor is it sufficient to overthrow this reasoning, that, among the innovations of recent times, the manners of people of Fashion have been brought into an

affected resemblance to those of their inferiors. The cropped head and groomish dress of the men, and the noisy tone and vulgar air of the women, would almost persuade a stranger that these are blunt and artless people, and that they love nothing more than honesty and plain-dealing. The fact however is, that though the mode of playing is varied, yet the game of dissimulation is still going on. This condescension to vulgarity is, after all, the disguise of pride, and not the dress of simplicity; and is as remote from the sincerity which it imitates, as from the refinement which it renounces.

There are in the *dress* of this people many singularities, upon which he who wished to say every thing that could be said, might say a great deal. The peculiarity which a stranger would be most apt to remark, is that of their striving to be as unlike as possible to the rest of the world. This appears, indeed, to be the parent of almost every other peculiarity;

and certainly gives birth to many changes not a little ridiculous and prejudicial.

It being a sort of fundamental maxim with them, that superiority consists in dissimilitude, they become engaged in a perpetual competition with the world at large, and to a certain degree with each other. In order to maintain this struggle for pre-eminence, they are compelled to vary the modes and materials of their dress in all the ways which a fanciful imagination can suggest. It happens, through some strange infatuation, that those who affect to despise the man or woman of Fashion, yet ape their dress and air with the most impertinent and vexatious perseverance. What is to be done in this case? Similitude is not to be endured. In order therefore to throw out their pursuers, these monopolizers of the mode are compelled to run into such eccentricities as nothing could justify or palliate but the distress to which they are reduced. If, for example, broad skirts and

low capes should be worn but for an instant by the herd of imitators; the skirts of men of Fashion must be cut off, and their capes pulled up to their ears, without loss of time. So if broad petticoats and high kerchiefs find their way among the misses of the crowd, the regions of Fashion are all bustle and confusion: petticoats are stripped and the bosom laid bare, though the east wind should be blowing at the time; and coughs, rheumatisms, and consumptions be on the wings of every blast. This will give my reader some idea of the principles which actuate people of Fashion in matters of dress: and the application of these principles to all the minutiae of the wardrobe, can be sufficiently imagined to answer all the ends of reasonable curiosity.

On the *language* of this people I have but little to offer. It is generally a dialect of the people among whom they live. They do, it is true, intersperse their conversational language with scraps of French: they also construct their complimentary phrases with sin-

gular dexterity ; and they have certain epithets, such as *dashing*, *stylish*, &c. which are perfectly their own. But if these things be excepted, the rest of their language is, to the best of my judgment, wholly vernacular.

I know it is an opinion among themselves, that their style and mode of expression are exquisitely refined, and carry the language which they speak to the highest perfection. To this opinion, however, I can by no means accede. I could offer many reasons for refusing them the merit which they claim ; but my reader may infer what I conceal from what I shall state. Whether it arise from the paucity of their words, the confusion of their ideas, or from any other intellectual or moral deficiency, so it is, that they have but *one* term by which they think themselves able to express their strong emotions both of pleasure and pain. On this term, therefore, you will find them ringing perpetual changes ; and strange to say, either in substantive, adjective, or verbal form, it is to be heard in almost

every sentence that falls from their lips. It is not a little remarkable, that in this respect they bear a close resemblance to the vulgarest part of the community : and it would furnish a subject of curious investigation why two classes in society, respectively the highest and the lowest, should exhibit so striking an agreement in a material branch of language. I know it has been said that extremes meet ; and the fact which has now been stated is so much proof that the remark is just : but that by no means solves the difficulty ; for, after all, the question returns upon us, *why* such a fact should exist ? I confess, for my own part, I wish that some one of their number would undertake to explain their real motives for courting a resemblance in *one* respect with that description of society, from which they make it their pride to differ in *every other*.

A fondness for *amusements* is one of the strongest characteristics of this people. They may almost be said to live for little else. They pass the whole of that short day which they

allow themselves, in making arrangements for spending the ensuing night. Indeed their preference of night to day is such, that they seem to consider the latter as having no other value than as it leads to the former, and affords an opportunity of preparing for its enjoyment. And hence I suppose it is, that such multitudes among them dine by candle-light, and go to bed by day-light.

This passion for diversions renders the *Sunday* particularly irksome to persons of any sort of *ton* in the fashionable world. A dose of piety in the morning is well enough, though it is somewhat inconvenient to take it quite so early; but then it wants an opera, or a play, or a dance, to carry it off. There are indeed some *esprit-forts* among the ladies, who are trying with no little success to redeem a portion of the sabbath from the insufferable bondage of the Bible and the sermon-book; and to naturalize that continental distribution of the day which gives the morning to devotion, and the evening to dissipation. It is

but justice to the gentlemen to say, that they discover no backwardness in supporting a measure so consonant to all their wishes. The influence* which Popery is acquiring in the higher walks of Fashion, will materially assist the progress of a scheme, of which that trafficking religion is both the parent and the patron. It is therefore not impossible that some considerable changes in this respect may soon be brought about. That good-humoured legislature which has allowed a Sunday newspaper, will perhaps not always refuse a Sunday opera or play. And to say the truth, it will be but just that the Catholics, when emancipated from *one* sort of restraints, should assist in emancipating the Protestants from *another*. People

* No less than *four* public masses for the soul of the Duc D'Enghien have been celebrated in London. Each was numerously attended by *fashionable* Protestants; and the last was given by a subscription, in which Protestants united with Catholics; and some of the former are said to have subscribed as much as 20*l.* towards a service, for their opposition to which thousands of Protestants in that very metropolis have formerly gone to the stake. Who can doubt, therefore, that the *influence of Popery is increasing?*

of Fashion will then no longer have to torture their invention for expedients to supply the absence of their diurnal diversions. They may then let their tradesmen go quietly to their parish-churches, instead of sending for them to wear away the sabbath hours in some supervacaneous employment. In short, Sunday may be set at liberty from its Protestant bondage, and exhibit as happy an union of morning solemnity and evening licentiousness as it has ever displayed among the fashionable adherents of Romish Christianity.

But to return—The rage for amusements is so strong in this people, that it seems to supersede all exercise of judgment in the choice and the conduct of them. To go every where, see every thing, and know every body, are, in their estimation, objects of such importance, that, in order to accomplish them, they put themselves to the greatest inconveniences, and commit the very grossest absurdities. Hence they will rush in crowds, to shine where they cannot be seen, to dance where they cannot

move, and to converse with friends whom they cannot approach; and, what is more, though they cannot breathe for the pressure, and can scarcely live for the heat, yet they call this—enjoyment.

Nor does this passion suffer any material abatement by the progress of time. Many veterans visit, to the last, the haunts of polite dissipation; they lend their countenance to those dramas of vanity in which they can no longer act a part, and show their incurable attachment to the pleasures of this world, by their unwillingness to decline them. The infirmities which attend upon the close of life are certainly designed to produce other habits; and it should seem that when every thing announces an approaching dissolution, the amusements of the drawing-room might give place to the employments of the closet. Persons, however, of this description are of another mind; and as every difficulty on the score of teeth, hoarseness, and wrinkles, can be removed by the happy expedients of ivory,

hair-caps, and cosmetics, there is certainly no physical objection to their continuing among their fashionable acquaintance till they are wanted in another world.

I cannot illustrate this part of my subject better than by presenting my readers with the following Ode on the Spring, written by a man of Fashion; it expresses, with so much exactness, the sentiments and taste of that extraordinary people, that it will stand in the place of a thousand observations upon their character.

ODE ON THE SPRING.

BY A MAN OF FASHION.

I.

LO ! where the party-giving dames,
 Fair Fashion's train, appear,
 Disclose the long-expected games,
 And wake the modish year.
 The opera-warbler pours her throat,
 Responsive to the actor's note,
 The dear-bought harmony of Spring ;
 While, beaming pleasure as they fly,
 Bright flambeaus through the murky sky,
 Their welcome fragrance fling.

II.

Where'er the rout's full myriads close
 The staircase and the door,
 Where'er thick files of belles and beaus
 Perspire through ev'ry pore :
 Beside some faro-table's brink,
 With me the Muse shall *stand* and think
 (Hemm'd sweetly in by squeeze of state),
 How vast the comfort of the crowd,
 How condescending are the proud,
 How happy are the great !

III.

Still is the toiling hand of Care,
 The drays and hacks repose ;
 But, hark, how through the vacant air
 The rattling clamour glows !
 The wanton Miss and rakish blade,
 Eager to join the masquerade,
 Through streets and squares pursue their fun ;
 Home in the dusk some bashful skim ;
 Some, ling'ring late, their motley trim
 Exhibit to the sun.

IV.

To Dissipation's playful eye,
 Such is the life for man,
 And they that halt and they that fly
 Should have no other plan.
 Alike the busy and the gay
 Should sport all night till break of day,
 In Fashion's varying colours drest ;
 Till seiz'd for debt through rude mischance,
 Or chill'd by age, they leave the dance,
 In gaol or dust—to rest.

Methinks I hear, in accents low,
Some sober quiz reply,
Poor child of Folly ! what art thou ?
A Bond Street butterfly !
Thy choice nor Health nor Nature greets,
No taste hast thou of vernal sweets,
Enslav'd by noise, and dress, and play :
Ere thou art to the country flown,
The sun will scorch, the Spring be gone,
Then leave the town in May.

CHAP. VI.

HAPPINESS ESTIMATED—PLANS OF REFORM.

I TRUST my reader is by this time sufficiently acquainted with the general outline of fashionable life: it would only be accumulating observations unnecessarily to enter farther into the subject; I shall therefore content myself with subjoining a few remarks upon the state of happiness among a people who claim to be considered the happiest of the species.

Happiness is, as moralists agree, a relative expression, and indicates the excess of the aggregate of good over that of evil in any given condition. The foundation of happiness therefore must be traced to the ideas which those upon whose condition the question turns are accustomed to entertain of good and evil; so that if we wished to ascertain the amount

of happiness in a life of fashion, we must make our calculation out of those things which constitute respectively good and evil in a fashionable estimation. I have had occasion to observe before, that a fashionable life is a life of sense ; consequently all the sources of happiness in such a condition must be confined to the pleasures of sense. Now, it must be considered that the pains of sense are at least as numerous as its pleasures ; and that, by a law of Providence subject to very few exceptions, those who will have the one must take their proportion of the other with them.

This observation is abundantly confirmed by what occurs in the experience of the parties under consideration. The pleasures which men of Fashion derive from the gratification of their animal appetites at the table, the gaming-house, and the brothel, have a very ample set-off in the inconvenience which they suffer from arthritic, nervous, and a thousand other painful and retributive complaints. Nor

are the gay and dissipated of the other sex exempted from the same contingency of constitutional suffering. Beside the common lot of human nature, they have a class of evils of their own procuring; and, by excesses as imprudent as they are immoral, they bring upon themselves a variety of diseases for which neither a name nor a remedy can be found. Many, it is true, avoid much of this inconvenience by mixing some discretion with their folly, and setting some bounds to their favourite gratifications: but then it is to be remembered that these are restraints which render persons of licentious minds singularly uneasy, and they may therefore be considered as administering to pain nearly in proportion as they abridge indulgence.

But supposing that we were to throw these severer items out of the calculation, there would still remain evils enough in a fashionable condition to keep the scale from preponderating on the side of pleasure. To shine in a ball-room is, no doubt, a high satisfac-

tion ; but then to be outshone by another (which is just as likely to happen), is at least as great a mortification : to be invited to *many* modish parties is really delightful ; but then to know those who are invited to *more* than ourselves, is certainly vexatious : to find one's-self surrounded by people of the highest fashion is charming ; but then to be dying with heat all the time is something in the other scale : to wear a coat or a head-dress of the newest invention, is indeed a pleasure of the highest order ; but then to see by accident articles of the same mode on the back of a man-milliner, and the head of a lady's maid, is a species of vexation not easily endured. An opera, a play, a party, a night passed at a dance, or at a cassino or a faro-table, are all events, to be sure, of the happiest occurrence ; but then to be disappointed of *one*, makes a deeper impression on the side of pain, than to be gratified with *three*, does on that of pleasure : and disappointments will happen where many objects are pursued ; and the concurrence of many instruments is ne-

cessary to their accomplishment. A drunken coachman, a broken pannel, a sick horse, a saucy footman, a mistaken message, a dull play, indifferent company, a head-ach, a heart-burn, an epidemical disease, or the dread of it, a death in the family, Sunday, fast-day, Passion-week, and a thousand other provoking casualties, either deprive these entertainments of their power of pleasing, or even set them wholly aside. I should only weary my reader were I to lay before him in detail half the catalogue of those minor distresses which embarrass the career of a modish life: he must however perceive, from the little which has been said, that every pleasure has its countervailing pain; and that though the privileges of a fashionable condition are certainly very many, yet happiness must not be reckoned among the number.

Hitherto those principles have been assumed as the basis of calculation upon which people of Fashion have *some* advantages in their favour; but there is another ground upon

which (to say the whole truth) it ought to be put, and on which all the advantages are *against* them. Man (it is notorious) is a reflecting being; and, do what he will, he *must* reflect. He may choose an *habitual* career of sense; but still he must have, whether he seek or shun them, moments of *reflection*. This is, I admit, extremely inconvenient, but then it is without a remedy; my business, however, is not to impugn or vindicate the existence of such a principle, but to show its bearings upon such a life as people of Fashion must necessarily lead. Not to enter into particulars, what can constitute a heavier affliction than for a man of Fashion (or, which is the same thing, a man of the world) to be obliged to think over again the events of his licentious career; to be persecuted with recollecting the property he has squandered, the wine he has drunk, the seduction he has practised, and the duels he has fought: these things were well enough at the time, they had their humour and their reputation, and they were not without their pleasure; but

then they were designed to be *acted*, and not *reflected* upon. The woman of Fashion is under the same law, and is, therefore, exposed to the same mental torments. She, too, must trace back (though she would give the world to be excused) the steps she has trodden in the enchanting walks of dissipation; she must live over again every portion of a life which, though too fascinating to be declined, is yet too shocking to be thought of. Her memory, too, must be haunted with frightful scenes, which remind her at the expense of how much health, and property, and time, and virtue, she has sustained the figure which made her so talked of, and the gaieties which rendered her so happy. Now these are real afflictions, and as such they are felt and acknowledged by the ingenuous part, at least, of the fashionable world.

Many expedients have been suggested for laying this busy principle asleep, and many plans struck out for rendering its pangs supportable, but hitherto without success; for,

though it has been proposed to laugh it away, dance it away, drink it away, or travel it away, yet not one of these projects has answered the end; and fashionable casuists are as far as ever from finding out a remedy of sufficient potency to cure, or even abate, the pains of reflection.

And here I cannot but remark how grievously the seat of this disease (for such it is considered) has been mistaken by those who have so lightly undertaken to prescribe for its removal. They have manifestly considered it as a disorder of the *nerves*; and hence all the remedies which they have recommended are calculated to promote, either by change of scene, or by some other mechanical impulse, a brisker circulation of the animal spirits: the ill success with which each has been attended sufficiently proclaims the fallacy upon which they all are founded. If reflection had been only a nervous disturbance, if it had arisen out of any disarrangement of the *animal* economy, some at least of the fashionable pos-

trums would have dispersed the complaint; whereas it is notorious, that while the stronger symptoms have disappeared, yet the disorder has remained in the system; and neither Bath, nor Weymouth, nor Tunbridge, nor town, has ever effected a cure.

The plain truth is (whatever may be insinuated to the contrary by these *medecins à-la-mode*), that the disease is altogether moral; and, consequently, the seat of it is not in the nerves, but in the *conscience*. There is nothing new in the complaint; it is inseparably connected with a fashionable career, and has been more or less the scourge of all, in every age, who have declined the duties which they owe “to God and their inferiors.” I take it to have been a malady of the very same description which afflicted Herod in his communication with the Baptist, and which made Felix tremble under the reasoning of Paul. It is not a little remarkable, that both these men of Fashion (for such no doubt they were) fell into the error which has been con-

demned in the treatment of their disease ; and each, there is reason to believe, carried it with him to his grave. If my reader now adverts to the particulars which have been stated, he will be compelled to draw conclusions not a little humbling to the pretensions of a fashionable condition. In few states of society is happiness very high : but I can hardly imagine it lower than it appears in the condition of those, who, while they are condemned to all the pains of sense, have no interest in the pleasures of reflection.

Now a system which does so little for the happiness of its supporters must have some radical defect ; and, it is worthy of the consideration of persons of Fashion, whether some steps should not be taken to ascertain that defect, and to provide a competent remedy for it. For my own part, I am inclined to think that INCONSISTENCY is that defect, and that the system will never be perfect till that is removed. I see but two ways by which this end may be brought about ; and as I wish

to render my work of some use to the people of whom it treats, I shall briefly propose them in their order.

1. The *first* plan of melioration is, *to renounce the Christian religion*. This turns upon the supposition, that the government, laws, and manners which now prevail, must at all events be retained. For if duels must be fought, what can be so preposterous as to swear allegiance to a law, which says "Thou shalt not kill?" If injuries must *not* be forgiven, where is the propriety of employing a prayer in which the petitioner declares that he *does* forgive them? If the passions are to be *gratified*, what end is answered by doing homage to those Scriptures which so peremptorily declare that they must be *mortified*? In a word, if swearing, prevarication, and sensuality, if a neglect of the duties to God and inferiors be necessary, or even allowable parts, of a fashionable character; where is the policy, the virtue, or even the decency of connecting it with a religion, which stamps these several

qualities with the deepest guilt, and threatens them with the severest retribution? If a religion of *some* sort be absolutely necessary, let such an one be chosen as may possess a correspondence with the other parts of that system with which it is to be associated: let it be a religion in which pride, and resentment, and lust, may have their necessary scope; a religion, in short, in which the god of this world may be the idol, and the men of this world the worshippers. Such an arrangement will go a great way towards establishing *consistency*: it will dissolve an union in which both parties are sufferers; and liberate at once the man of Fashion from a profession which involves him in contradiction, and Christianity from a connexion which covers her with disgrace.

2. If, on the other hand, it should be thought material to retain Christianity, the plan of reform must be *inverted*, and the sacrifices taken from those maxims and habits, which interfere with the spirit and the injunctions

of that holy religion. It is altogether out of the character of Christianity to act a subservient or an accommodating part. It will, therefore, be necessary to invest her with absolute authority, and to give her a commanding jurisdiction. The consequence of such a measure will necessarily be a complete revolution in the arrangements of Fashion. In the progress of this reform, certain inconveniences will necessarily be encountered; but they will be speedily compensated by an influx of real and permanent advantages. Religion will then be known by something better than her pains and penalties; and it will then be found, that conscience can whisper peace, as well as utter reproach. All the details of life and conduct will then be made to harmonize with each other. Duty and pleasure will have their proper times, and places, and limits. Every thing, in short, will be preserved in the system which can facilitate intercourse without impairing virtue; and nothing be struck out but what administers to vanity, duplicity, and vice.

Whether changes of such magnitude will ever take place, I cannot pretend to conjecture; but certain I am, that if ever they should, the world at large will be very much the better for them. Greatly as I wish the reformation of principles and the suppression of vice, I am not sanguine in my expectations of either event, while rank, and station, and wealth, throw their mighty influence into the opposite scale. Then, and *not till then*, will Christianity obtain the dominion she deserves, when “the makers of our manners” shall submit to her authority, and the PEOPLE OF FASHION become the PEOPLE OF GOD.

THE END.

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